Broughton
Parish Council

20 November 2024

Huntingdon District Council
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon
PE29 3TN

Subject: Local Plan Consultation Response: CfS 153, Land off Causeway Road, Broughton

Dear Sirs

Executive Summary

Broughton Parish Council has considered the proposed development of the land off Causeway Road, Broughton.

In this document we set out issues relevant to the Land Area Assessment of this site and comment on the Site Appraisal ratings made for the site as well as the Further Issues and Options 2024 with respect to Tackling Flooding and Water.

Our assessment is that the environmental and conservation impacts of development on this site, at the scale proposed, strongly outweigh the benefits.

Our recommendation is that this site be withdrawn from consideration.

This letter includes:

1. Introduction - a brief description of Broughton
2. Comments on the site and associated constraints
3. Comments on the proposed development and associated impacts
4. Comments on the Site Appraisal
5. Our conclusions and recommendations

Appendix: Broughton Village – Conservation Notes

Date: 20 November 2024

Subject: Local Plan Consultation Response: CfS 153, Land off Causeway Road, Broughton

Introduction

Broughton is a small village just over 1km west of the A141 and around 2km south-west of Warboys. The village dates back to Anglo-Saxon times and much of the village is within a Conservation Area. The Conservation area includes 27 listed buildings protected for their special architectural and/or historic interest. The proposed development site is entirely within the Conservation Area.

Broughton is situated in a landscape of much environmental significance, with the surrounding countryside providing valuable habitats for wildlife. The village is surrounded by farmland and meadows. When not in flood, the Bury Brook adds to the village's charm and plays an important role in supporting biodiversity in the area including hedgerows and grasslands rich in wildlife. The appendix at the end of this document provides further details of the history and significance of the village.

Properties and roads – particularly Causeway Road - in Broughton have a history of flooding from the Bury Brook and surface runoff. This is a continuing problem, which will be exacerbated by climate change and development. The Environment Agency and Cambridge County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, have supported Broughton's Flood Action Group since the latest severe flooding in December 2020.

The village is served by three minor roads, two of which connect to the A141. The roads meet at a T-junction in the centre of the village which has restricted visibility. The roads carry both vehicular and pedestrian traffic since much of the village is without pavements. The roads are narrow and subject to rat-run traffic.

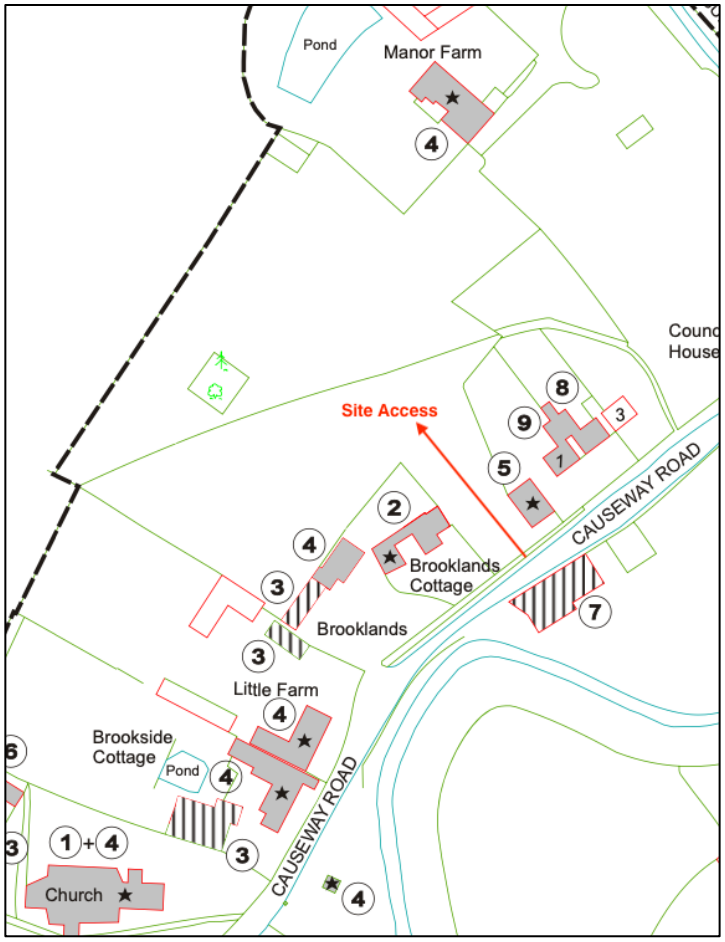
Date: 20 November 2024

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The Site

Location

The site is entirely within the Broughton Conservation Area. Access to the site is from Causeway Road through what is currently a farm gate used for occasional agricultural access.



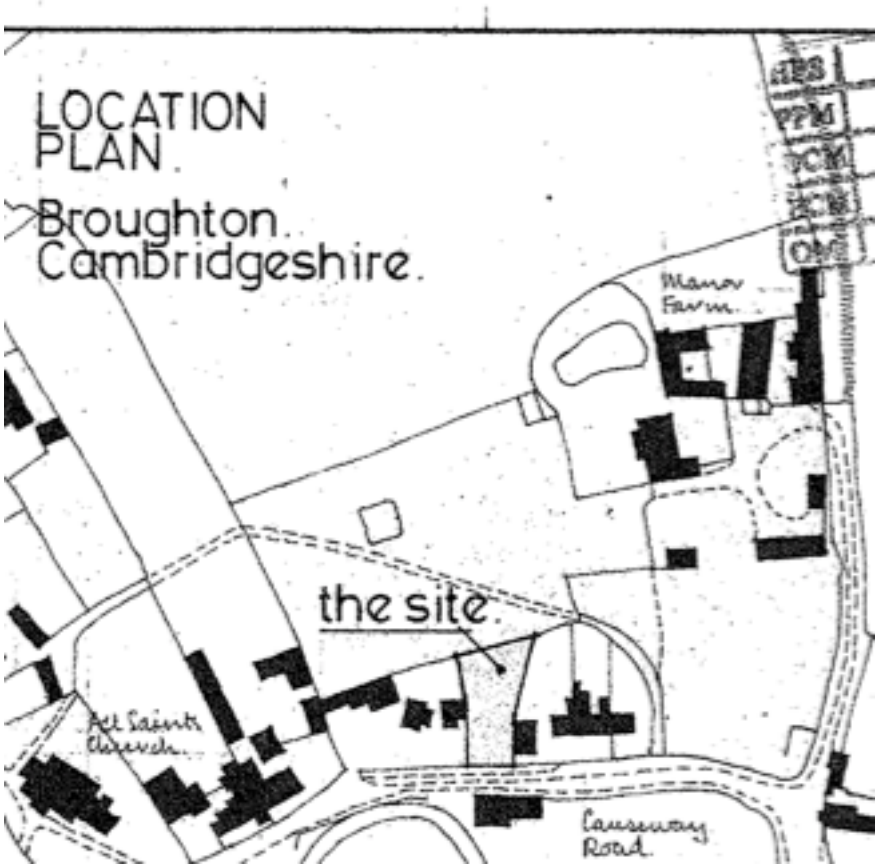
The site access (red arrow) runs between two listed buildings: Brooklands Cottage and the Baptist Chapel (numbers 2 and 5 respectively on the following map extract from the HDC Character Statement for the Conservation Area).

Figure 1 Listed buildings around site (HDC Character Statement)

The site has no physical boundary to the north-west, the extent of the site being defined by a historic field boundary. As can be seen from the map extract above, the proposed site is behind the existing dwellings on Causeway Road. It extends close to the Manor Farm boundary. The site falls gently away in height from Manor Farm.

Relevant Planning History

The Land Availability Assessment refers to lapsed planning reference 0401308REM. This was for a single infill development, sited between the Baptist Chapel and Brooklands Cottage, not a multi-dwelling backfill development as proposed in this Land Area Assessment.



The lapsed application demonstrates the possibility of a single dwelling. This was to have been located following the historic linear plan noted in Huntingdonshire District Council's Character Statement for the Conservation Area.

Figure 2: Location map from lapsed application 0401308REM

Greenfield Development

The proposed site is a greenfield site comprising grade 2 agricultural land. The Land Availability Assessment considers this site suitable for greenfield development as it is not grade 1.

As grade 2 land, however, it is irreplaceable and its value from an environmental point of view should not be ignored. Its loss would be contrary to NPPF Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, 180(b) and to DEFRA environmental policies relating to Environmental Land Management, encouraging farmers through schemes such as Countryside Stewardship and Sustainable Farming Incentive to increase the amounts of hedgerows, trees and biodiversity on their land.

The land is designated as grade 2 agricultural land. It is grassland; valuable ancient meadow land / permanent pasture, the loss of which would have an adverse environmental impact re the local wildlife and flora and fauna. Owls, bats and newts are regularly observed on or adjacent to the site. The previous permission for one house (lapsed planning reference 0401308REM) would not have had a substantial adverse impact on that field but development of the whole area would.

Grade 2 land is still characterised as '*best and most versatile agricultural land*' in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), designated as very good quality. The NPPF is clear that lower quality land should be developed in preference.

Services

Broughton has limited facilities in the village: a church, pub and village hall. The only public transport available is the RH3 which makes a single stop in the village on a Thursday. So, the village is heavily dependent on personal cars and delivery vehicles. The A141 and St Ives Improvement Package does not currently include any improvements to transport for the village.

Employment in the village is limited to the pub, Rose Cottage Care Home and 4 small businesses in Broughton Business Park.

Access to employment, shops, education or medical facilities will, therefore, require the use of personal transport, so this development is poor in terms of sustainability.

Environment

Broughton is surrounded by farmland. It has 2 County Wildlife sites within the village and a further site, managed by a local farmer, nearby.

The rural surroundings contribute to the extensive heritage assets of the village, as noted in the Land Area Assessment. The Huntingdonshire District Council's Character Assessment of the Conservation Area identifies *a number of key elements which combine to give the village its sense of place* including:

- *The existence of long ranging vistas out of the Conservation Area into the surrounding countryside, and*
- *The presence of long-established hedges, earth banks and landscaped boundaries*

From light pollution maps (e.g., CPRE's Light Pollution Dark Skies map) Broughton can be seen to have relatively dark skies. Light pollution from Warboys and Wyton is visible on the horizon from Broughton, but with no streetlighting, the sky overhead is relatively dark.

The current open field has environmental value for owls and bats from the Manor Farm site and from the church and they can regularly be seen feeding near the Baptist Chapel.

There is a magnificent Sequoiadendron giganteum on the site, adjacent to Manor Farm. This tree is thought to date to the 19th century and has an extensive root structure.

The Proposed Development and its Impacts

Flooding

Introduction

Properties and roads in Broughton have a history of flooding which is currently underestimated by the available hazard mapping, and which will increase with climate change.

The Environment Agency and Cambridge County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority have supported Broughton Flood Action Group[1] since the flooding in December 2020[2] because they recognise the scale of the current risk and the difficulties of managing future risk. Therefore, any increased pressure on the rapidly responding Bury Brook catchment will exacerbate the impacts of climate and further increase flooding in Broughton. This includes the substantial proposed developments at Hungary Hall Farm (CfS 47), Lodge Farm (CfS 256) and Sapley Park Garden Village (CfS 197), which lie immediately upstream of Broughton in the Bury Brook catchment. The urbanisation of any one or more of these currently greenfield areas will concentrate runoff into the river which, due to the shallow gradient, drains slowly and via pumps to Europe's largest pump station at St Germans (Kings Lynn).

Causeway Road in Broughton already floods regularly to depths that leave cars stranded and, with high velocities, pose a risk to life. See the following selection of photos from past flood events. Cambridge County Council have recently installed a flood gauge on the footbridge adjacent to Causeway Road as this is one of the first sites in the village to flood.

The proposed Hungary Hall development, upstream of Broughton, as well as major developments at Lodge Farm (CfS 256) and Sapley Park Garden Village (CfS 197) would significantly increase the existing risk and directly oppose the Risk Management Authorities' ongoing attempts to reduce flood risk in the village, as well as downstream in Wistow and Ramsey. To provide a joined-up response with regards flood risk to Broughton, we have included context and comment below related to these upstream connected developments. The following sections demonstrate why this site should be withdrawn from further consideration for development.





[1] https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/flood-and-water/community-flood-action-programme/community-flood-groups

[2] https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Broughton-December-2020-Flood-Investigation.pdf



Figure 3: Photos of Causeway Road during past flood events. Access to *Land off Causeway Road (CfS 153)* is to the right of the final photograph at one of the deepest points of flooding

Broughton is already at high risk of flooding

Cambridge County Council's Section 19 report of the December 2020 floods, when 16 properties were flooded internally as well as external flooding of gardens, outbuildings, and roads, states that *"Areas of Broughton have flooded multiple times in recent years from both Bury Brook and surface water".* Broughton Flood Action group reports the low-lying Causeway and Bridge Roads to the Police a number of times each year since they flood to depths which leave cars stranded and pose a danger to life in deep and fast flowing water (see photos).

The EA and CCC provide ongoing support to the village via the Broughton Flood Action Group who have invested in pumps, wet vacuum cleaners, personal protective equipment and watercourse maintenance equipment. The community flood action plan has been approved by the EA. CCC is currently undertaking a project for 16 key locations across Cambridgeshire, including Broughton, to determine the feasibility of flood mitigation and ultimately to develop a programme of works. These ongoing endeavours would be nullified by increased risk from the proposed upstream development, highlighting a lack of joined up thinking between HDC and these Risk Management Authorities.

If further evidence of the trauma that being flooded causes, the following is a reflection of one resident of Broughton following December 2020:

"The flooding of one's home will have significant psychological effect by disrupting physical security and emotional well-being. The effect will be both immediate and long-lasting.

It is difficult to understand the shock and disbelief unless one's home has been flooded. The unexpected sight of seeing one's home being destroyed can overwhelm the ability to process the situation, leaving one feeling confused and emotionally numb. The loss of personal belongings, displacement and uncertainty about recovery will lead to anxiety and ongoing feelings of unease.

The loss of possessions and sentimental items can cause grief, because a home is a symbol of stability and identity where individuals have made emotional connections. Experiencing a flood can cause flashbacks and heightened sensitivity to every new rainfall event. The physical disarray of a flooded home can cause a feeling of isolation and a loss of control.

The recovery period can be long and difficult with a further emotional strain which is not always recognised by those who have not been flooded."

HDC Further Issues and Option 2024: Tackling Flooding and Water: The following is highlighted in the What you Told Us section but does not appear to have been taken into account in the current selection of sites in and upstream of Broughton:

- Avoiding development in high-risk flood areas, prioritising brownfield development
- Avoiding sites that are reliant on flood defences or ensuring that they are sufficiently resilient to remain safe
- Considering catchment based, up and down-stream impacts and cumulative impacts of development for flooding and water issues

The history of flooding in Broughton, partly evidenced by the ongoing support of Risk Management Authorities for our community through the Broughton Flood Action Group, demonstrates that development should be avoided both within and upstream of Broughton, including the Hungary Hall Farm (CfS 47) site.

The available modelling of the Bury Brook underestimates our current and future flood risk

The Environment Agency (EA) flood modelling of the Bury Brook, which is used on https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/ and in the *Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Strategy: Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* (SFRA) very likely underestimates the risk along the river, including to Broughton. Broughton Flood Action Group have been assisting the EA to undertake channel survey in 2024. The EA provided this assessment of the 2016 model (used, for example, to delineate the functional floodplain in Appendix D of the SFRA):

The current model is almost 10 years old now and it was based on a survey from the early 1990's which is outdated and not reflective of the catchment as it is today. There is also a lack of gauge data within the catchment, leading to a lot of uncertainty within the hydrology for the modelling. We have not been able to do anything regarding the gauge data but at least we do have the new survey to remove some of the uncertainty. The model does not fully reflect the flood history with a number of properties that we know to have flooded not being shown to be at risk…. Once we have an improved baseline model, we can look at whether there are any viable options which could potentially help reduce the flood risk to the village.

Since the 1990s, the EA have ceased to dredge the channel so that it conveys less water which has increased flood levels. Further, climate change projections have increased since 2016 so that the model likely underestimates the frequency and severity of flooding. The new EA model is due in Autumn 2025 and, until this new model can be used, any assessment is likely to underestimate risk. Nonetheless, even based on the existing data, the SFRA Appendix C Development Site Assessment Spreadsheet recommends withdrawal of

all four sites in and upstream of Broughton from the Local Plan. Reassessment using updated model data will further confirm these recommendations which HDC is urged to follow.

HDC Further Issues and Option 2024: Tackling Flooding and Water, and the Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Strategy: Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment: All consideration of flood risk in the Local Plan, including the SFRA Appendix C Development Site Assessment Spreadsheet and the Appendix D Delineation of the Functional Floodplain is based on outdated modelling and likely to underestimate existing and future flood risk from the Bury Brook, including to Broughton. Once the new EA model is available from Autumn 2025, the flood risk as currently stated is likely to increase. This will further strengthen the existing assessment made in Appendix C of the sites within the Bury Brook catchment which recommended withdrawal of site CfS 153.

We strongly recommend that HDC follows the advice of the SFRA and removes this site from further consideration in the Local Plan, given that updated modelling is most likely to strengthen these existing recommendations.

Climate change is already increasing flood risk

As quoted in the Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Study SFRA, Government allowances for climate change uplifts on peak river flows in this area suggest that by the 2080s, peak flows will have increased by up to 39% compared to the 1981-2000 baseline. Similarly, peak rainfall events will have increased by up to 40% by the 2070s. The Bury Brook has a shallow gradient to the sea at Kings Lynn, with Broughton lying only about 15m above sea level; the same fall as across the proposed Hungary Hall Farm site. The Middle Level Commission (MLC) operate Europe's largest pump station at St Germans, with a major constraint being conveying flood flows to the station through the network of narrow rivers and pumps. Sea level is projected to rise by over 1m by 2100, further increasing the burden (at huge cost) of pumping to keep heavily managed MLC area, including the Bury Brook catchment, at its current level of flood risk. Any additional pressure on drainage through the MLC area, including through increased development in the Bury Brook catchment, will increase the risk of channels and pumps being overwhelmed or failing and is ultimately unsustainable.

As stated in Section 3.3 of the Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Study SFRA:

Local plans should [apply the NPPF] by safeguarding land from development that is required, or likely to be required, for current or future flood management; and to seek opportunities for the relocation of development, including housing, to more sustainable locations from areas where climate change is expected to increase flood risk.

Modelling of climate change on Bury Brook flood risk has not been undertaken to inform the Local Plan and it has already been shown that the existing modelling, which is used as a proxy for climate change in Section 4.7.2 of the SFRA, underestimates risk. Any further assessment of climate impacts on flood risk at the sites in and upstream of Broughton should use the new EA model due Autumn 2025 and should consider 'without defences' modelling which should include failure of pumps through the MLC area and the subsequent impeded drainage of the rivers.

HDC Further Issues and Option 2024: Tackling Flooding and Water states that HDC will use the updated Level 1 SFRA to help decide where new developments should be and that the impact of climate change is an important consideration, with numerous reports that the risk to life from flooding could increase significantly. We agree with these statements and therefore request that the proposed Land off Causeway Road, Broughton (CfS 153) site is withdrawn from further consideration since access is from the regularly flooded Causeway Road where there is already a risk to life from deep and fast flowing water which will be exacerbated by climate change.

The cumulative impact of up to three major developments would be significant

The Local Plan proposes 3 major developments within the Bury Brook catchment which would convert up to nearly 500 ha of greenfield land to over 18,000 homes plus associated infrastructure. *The Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Study Appendix G Catchment-level assessment of Cumulative Impacts of Development on Flood Risk* assesses the development in the Bury Brook as having a Medium cumulative impact on flood risk. However, the following should be considered:

- Historic flood risk: The EA Recorded Flood Outline is known to under-report incidents of flooding and the zero postcode points for the Bury Brook in the historic flood outlines is clearly in error given the evidence of the CCC Section 19 Flood Investigation into the December 2020 flooding in Broughton, quoted in the main SFRA document in Sections 4.8.1 and 4.8.2.
- Sensitivity to increases in flood flows: As already stated, existing modelling underestimates flood risk from the Bury Brook and climate change should consider the future burden and potential failure of this heavily pumped catchment.
- Growth score: Whilst this is not defined in Appendix G, it is noted that the only two catchments given a HIGH score (Alconbury and Brampton Brooks, and the Bury Brook) are two which have experienced the most significant flooding. Out of all catchments, the Bury Brook has the second highest % area of growth (Alconbury has the highest). It is deeply concerning that HDC consider these two already flood-prone catchments suitable to propose the Highest level of development.

We would contend that this cumulative impact assessment is flawed and the Bury Brook should be re-classified as High overall RAG score with a rank far higher than its current position of 9th.

Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Study Appendix G Catchment-level assessment of Cumulative Impacts of Development on Flood Risk: Given the history of flooding, we request that the overall RAG score of 'MEDIUM' cumulative impacts of development on Broughton is revised upwards to 'HIGH', with its rank similarly revised upwards.

Since the Bury Brook has the second highest % area of growth of all sites assessed (8.67%), the MEDIUM rating appears to be because zero postcode points are in the historic flood outlines. As reported in the main SFRA Level 1 document in Sections 4.8.1 (fluvial) and 4.8.2 (surface water), Broughton has a significant history of flooding.

Further, it is deeply concerning that the Alconbury and Bury Brook catchments – arguably two of the most at risk catchments north of Huntingdon - have been selected for the highest scale of development, receiving a HIGH growth RAG scores in Table 2.4 of Appendix G.

Rights of Way

Two public footpaths run through the open agricultural land of the site. Rerouting the footpaths to allow development would make the routes less direct. Development on the site would also detract from the open nature of the paths which give good views of the historic features of the village. We would expect this development to be strongly resisted by villagers and environmental interest groups.

Traffic

The appropriate access width and splays for access onto Causeway Road would need to be demonstrated for this site. Cambridgeshire County Council Highways raised a concern on these matters for a single-dwelling conversion further along Causeway Road (reference 19/00238/FUL and 19/00239/LBC).

While access onto Causeway Road may have been acceptable for the lapsed planning reference 0401308REM, this was for a single dwelling and suitability would need to be considered for higher volumes of traffic arising from multiple dwellings on this site.

Environment

The dark night skies contribute to both the character of the village and to wildlife, as night hunting birds and mammals frequent the open spaces in and around the village. Bats from the church and Manor Farm are regularly seen feeding on this site.

Light pollution from the proposed development, from traffic accessing the site and possibly localised street lighting would raise light pollution levels significantly, disrupting the feeding patterns of these protected mammals.

Whilst there is no Tree Protection Order on the large Sequoiadendron giganteum adjacent to Manor Farm, development of that area would be of detriment to that magnificent and unique tree. Damage to the tree's extensive root structure could result in its loss and this would require protection during and after development.

Heritage Aspects

The site is totally within the Broughton Conservation Area i.e. 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

HDC's Conservation Area Character Statement for Broughton notes that:

- *Historically the village was linear in plan and its historic pattern has remained largely unchanged (para 2.4).* This backfill development would conflict with that, introducing a mini-estate of backfill dwellings
- *Impressive views of the church and other buildings in the village centre are afforded from Manor Farm (para 3.4.1v).* The proposed site is directly in the sightline from Manor Farm to the church
- The space is marked on Map 2 as an *Important open Space* and should be retained as such
- The '*absence of backland and tandem development*' is cited as a fundamental element of the Conservation Area (p16). Again this backfill development would directly conflict with that.

Access to the site would be between two grade II listed buildings (Brooklands Cottage and the Baptist Chapel). Access for residents' cars, delivery vehicles, refuse collection etc would be detrimental to those listed buildings in terms of noise, visual context and light pollution.

The development would increase the number of dwellings in the village by almost 10%, adding new dwellings in one of the most sensitive areas from a conservation and heritage perspective.

Any screening to attempt to mitigate these problems would be detrimental to the listed buildings, particularly the Baptist Chapel, which has no additional land to the side facing the access.

The Land Availability Assessment refers to Designing 'a scheme of high quality reflective of local character'. We consider that this would be unachievable given the impacts on the listed buildings, the violation of the linear plan of development of dwellings in the Conservation Area and the open aspect of the space in this sensitive area.

Comments on the Site Appraisal

We have considered the ratings given against each of the criteria in the Site Appraisal. For some of the criteria we believe that, based on local knowledge, the ratings given may not be appropriate:

SA2 (*Is the site located in an area with lower resilience to the predicted impacts of climate change?*): The site is dependent on access from Causeway Road, which is in flood risk zone 3b. The site, therefore, has lower resilience to the effects of climate change than the '+' rating for this objective would suggest. We recommend, therefore, that it be considered as '- -'

SA3 (*Use land in flood zone 1 (unless the proposed use is water compatible) taking into account the impact from surface water flood risk?*): The same comment as for SA2 applies i.e., that although the majority of the site is in zone 1, the site is critically dependent on a zone 3b access road. We suggest a '- -' instead of '–'

SA5 (*Promote new development with opportunities to participate in leisure and recreation using publicly accessible natural green space?)*: This has been rated as '- -' as being remote from any natural greenspace. This is clearly incorrect given the access to public footpaths and the village green and we suggest that this should be a '+'.

SA6 *(Impact on a designated site of biodiversity or geodiversity significance).* This has been rated as a '+', however, the damage to wildlife and the environment from building on this site should, we suggest, score a '-' or '- -'

SA7: *(Make efficient use of land whilst also protecting the form and character of the local area?)* The development would spoil the character of the local area and create a mini estate in a conservation area. We question the '+' rating given for this: the land is currently Grade 2 agricultural. The development will block or impair sight lines from Manor Farm towards church (Character Statement). Land is of environmental importance re loss of grassland / habitat etc rather than loss of food production. We recommend that this objective be scored as a '-' or '- -'.

SA8: *(Be unlikely to cause or suffer from widespread light, noise, odour or visual pollution?)* This is rated as a '+'. The light, noise and visual pollution from the site, in a sensitive Conservation Area should be a '-' or '- -'. While one infill development might have minor impact, a development of 9 houses would have significant light, noise and visual pollution effects.

SA10: *(Minimise the distance people need to travel to access leisure and cultural facilities?)* As noted, Broughton has minimal leisure and cultural facilities and we recommend that this objective be scored as '- -'.

SA11 *(Facilitate access to a range of employment opportunities)* As noted, employment opportunities in the village are minimal and are insignificant compared to 9 new households on this site. The Business Park supports 4 very small companies with low vacancy rates. We recommend that this objective be scored as '-'.

SA12 *(Benefit from access to active travel infrastructure for practical and social activities)* It is difficult to see how a short stretch of pavement outside the site qualifies this objective for a '++' assessment. With no active travel infrastructure, apart from footpaths we recommend a '-' or '- -' rating for this.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the above has demonstrated that:

- Access to the site is solely from Causeway Road, which is a 3b flood zone and the first location to flood within Broughton. Flooding on this road is so severe that it can pose a risk to life and would periodically cut the site off from access
- Runoff from the site could further exacerbate flooding, which is also likely to increase as a result of climate change and potential large-scale developments upstream at Wyton on the Hill
- The site is greenfield development on Grade 2 (very good quality) agricultural land. From the NPPF para 180(b) planning decisions should '*recognise the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land*'
- The site is entirely within the Conservation Area. This development would be severely detrimental to characteristics noted as fundamental in the Conservation Area Character Statement including:
  - The open sightline between the church and Manor Farm
  - The historic linear pattern of development
  - The lack of backland and tandem development and retention of open spaces
- The development would increase the number of dwellings in the village by almost 10%, adding them in one of the most sensitive areas from a conservation and heritage perspective
- The development would be detrimental to the adjacent listed buildings, including Brooklands Cottage, the Baptist Chapel and Manor Farm
- Noise and light pollution would be harmful to the wildlife, including bats and owls, which frequent the site

In conclusion, we believe that the site is inappropriate for development on the scale proposed i.e. 9 dwellings.

Recommendations

- **We strongly recommend that this site is not included in the Local Plan for multiple-dwelling development**
- We recommend that the area developed, and number of dwellings be reduced below the 5-dwelling threshold required for inclusion in the Local Plan. The preferred scale of development would be to revert to the 1998 infill proposal for a single dwelling on the site, which would be in keeping with the linear development characteristic of the area, preserving the character of the Conservation Area.
- If developed, we recommend that particular consideration is given to flooding of the access via Causeway Road which will require joint working between HDC and the Risk Management Authorities

Date: 20 November 2024

Subject: Local Plan Consultation Response: CfS 153, Land off Causeway Road, Broughton

Yours sincerely,



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Chair of Broughton Parish Council

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Copies to: Broughton Parish Council

Broughton
Parish Council

Appendix: Broughton Village – Conservation Notes

History and Origins of the Village

Broughton is a picturesque and historic village situated in a secluded shallow valley with its roots dating back to the Anglo-Saxon period. Its name is derived from "broc", meaning a brook, and "tun" meaning a farm or settlement. The name "Broughton" suggests a settlement by a stream or brook. Bury Brook is the main watercourse running through the village.

After the Norman Conquest records trace the ecclesiastical ownership of the village back to the Abbot of Ramsey. Broughton grew as a rural farming community and in 1539 ownership was granted to the Cromwell family. The village has three main routes (Bridge Rd, School Rd and Causeway Rd), all of which converge at a central point opposite All Saints' Church and the Crown Inn public house. There are few pavements throughout the village.

Architectural Features and Significance

The village saw an increase in the construction of brick-built houses and farm buildings in the 17th Century in addition to many workers' thatched cottages, all of which evolved into the present conservation area. Many buildings are listed Grade II, with the church listed as Grade II*, featuring many varying chimney styles, dormer windows, and farm buildings. The styles vary from medieval to Dutch and modern.

The church stands as a focal point and the prominent feature of the village. The interior of the church retains much of its original charm with several medieval paintings of important historical value.

Environmental Importance

Broughton is situated in a landscape of much environmental significance with the surrounding countryside providing valuable habitats for wildlife. The village is surrounded by farmland, meadows and grass wetlands. The brook adds to the village's charm and plays an important role in supporting biodiversity in the area including hedgerows and grasslands rich in wildlife. The conservation area helps to protect the area from unsympathetic development ensuring that the rural character of Broughton is preserved.

Flooding Damage to Buildings

Most of the old buildings in Broughton are homes to families, not simply "quaint" historical curiocities. The addition of extra buildings near or around older structures can cause significant flooding damage:

a. **Increased Surface Runoff.** The introduction of more buildings will result in less permeable ground thereby reducing the area for water to naturally soak into the soil. Rainwater will run off into the surrounding environment, probably overwhelming existing drainage systems, and leading to flooding in areas near older buildings, especially buildings in the conservation area. Buildings that were never designed to cope with any possible increase in volumes of surface water.

b. **Obstruction of Natural Drainage.** New developments can block natural flow paths of minor streams or stormwater channels causing water to accumulate around older buildings. Any increase water pressure on foundations and walls can cause structural damage.

c. **Higher Groundwater Levels.** The construction of additional new buildings adjacent to the conservation area can raise the water table. This can lead to moisture penetration into the foundations of older buildings causing rising damp, mould, and the deterioration of wooden sole-plates and daub-and-wattle walls. Erosion of soil near older buildings can cause shifts in the settlement of a building's foundations leading to cracks and possible structural failure.

d. **Inadequate Flood Prevention Measures.** Older buildings in the conservation area were frequently constructed without modern flood mitigation measures such as water barriers and damp proofing. Additional unplanned surface water can overwhelm these outdated systems and allow water to seep into the structure.

e. **Pressure on Local Infrastructure.** The addition of extra new buildings near older buildings can disrupt natural water flow and introduce new pressures on existing older buildings. This will increase the risk of flooding and subsequent damage.

Conclusion

Broughton is a quintessential example of a rural English conservation village, with its rich history, unique architecture, and environmental importance. The architectural charm of its listed buildings reflects the village's history, while ongoing conservation efforts aim to protect buildings and the natural environment from modern challenges including flooding and climate change. Broughton's strong sense of community and commitment to heritage preservation will ensure that the villages will continue to thrive without the risk of encroaching development.